

From: Gerald Hurley <gerald.hurley@waterfordchamber.ie>

Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 3:12:32 PM

To: Correspondence Unit <Minister_FHERIS@dfheris.gov.ie>

Cc: Patrick O'Donovan <patrick.odonovan@oireachtas.ie>; External - Taoiseach <taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie>; minister@education.gov.ie <minister@education.gov.ie>; Mary Butler <Mary.Butler@oireachtas.ie>; David Cullinane <David.Cullinane@oireachtas.ie>; Marc OCathasaigh <Marc.OCathasaigh@oireachtas.ie>; Matt Shanahan <Matt.Shanahan@oireachtas.ie>; John Cummins <John.Cummins@oireachtas.ie>; president@setu.ie <president@setu.ie>; Jack Chambers <jack.chambers@oir.ie>; Martin Browne <martin.browne@oireachtas.ie>; Jackie Cahill <jackie.cahill@oireachtas.ie>; Alan Kelly <alan.kelly@oireachtas.ie>; Michael Lowry <michael.lowry@oireachtas.ie>; Mattie McGrath <mattie.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie>; Kathleen Funchion <kathleen.funchion@oireachtas.ie>; John McGuinness <john.mcguinness@oireachtas.ie>; Malcolm Noonan <malcolm.noonan@oireachtas.ie>; Jennifer Murnane OConnor <jennifer.murnaneoconnor@oireachtas.ie>; John Paul Phelan <johnpaul.phelan@oireachtas.ie>; James Browne <james.browne@oireachtas.ie>; Brendan Howlin <brendan.howlin@oireachtas.ie>; Paul Kehoe <paul.kehoe@oireachtas.ie>; Verona Murphy <verona.murphy@oireachtas.ie>; Johnny Mythen <johnny.mythen@oireachtas.ie>; John Hurley :: Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce <john@kilkennychamber.ie>; Jenny Beresford <jenny@dungarvanchamber.ie>; Paula <paula@countywexfordchamber.ie>; ceo@carlowchamber.com <ceo@carlowchamber.com>; CEO@CountyTipperaryChamber.com <CEO@CountyTipperaryChamber.com>; Niall Harrington <niall@whiteboxltd.ie>; Paul Nolan <Paul.Nolan@dawnmeats.com>

Subject: The Proposed Programmes in Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy at the South East Technological University (SETU)

Dear Minister O'Donovan,

On behalf of all the Chambers of Commerce in the South East, we are calling on Government to approve the development of the proposed programmes in veterinary medicine, nursing and pharmacy at the South East Technological University (SETU).

Be in no doubt that there is cross party and cross county support politically for this, from every TD, Senator, Council member and stakeholder in the South East. Government has made extensive commitments in terms of developing not only SETU, but the Region, and it is imperative that Government awards the above mentioned schools to SETU based on merit alone. We understand that other Government officials involved in this process will have their own allegiance to their constituencies, but we very much hope these will be awarded on regional suitability and capability and not on political allegiances.

For decades the South East region has experienced a crippling brain drain. This is the opportunity to address that. Establishing a pipeline of highly skilled veterinary practitioners, nurses and pharmacists for the South East region is essential, because without such equitable investment, this South East academic 'flagship' mandated by Government will not materialise, resulting in more and more of our young professionals looking elsewhere for their education.

Without doubt, SETU must be the obvious location for a Veterinary School, given the dominance of the Agri Food Industry in the South East, 20% of the State's agricultural output, 12,000 farms (beef, dairy, sheep and bloodstock), 16% sectorial employment and the current alignment with Kildalton College, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny. Kildalton College boasts the largest Teagasc college nationally where courses in agriculture, horticulture and equine studies are supported and where SETU supports course provision to levels 7 and 8. In fact, so committed and ambitious

are SETU to this school, they recently recruited a lead on Veterinary Medicine from Cambridge University to deliver on the university's potential to initially educate over 40 veterinarians per year with a promise of access for practical training in the meat and processing facilities across the region.

In terms of pharmacy and nursing, the South East boasts a vibrant and successful pharma and medical sector. With a catchment of over 634,000 people within an hour's drive of Waterford City, this makes the South East the largest region outside of Dublin. The current and future multinationals and medical facilities are in urgent need of a highly skilled workforce, particularly as the South East is the fastest growing region in Ireland. A School of Pharmacy and a School of Nursing would be well placed to fulfil the needs and ambitions of these sectors, in line with the plans outlined in the National Planning Framework.

Additionally, in terms of pharmacy, viable options were assessed at University of Galway, South East Technological University and Atlantic Technological University; while University of Limerick, South East Technological University and Atlantic Technological University were assessed as viable options for Veterinary Medicine. We are confident that the robust submissions presented by SETU is testament to our shared ambition in the South East to make SETU a University of substance offering relevant and world class education to and for the citizens of the region and beyond.

These schools will ensure SETU is attracting high-calibre students from the South East and beyond, supporting regional development and building a vibrant innovation ecosystem that promotes high-quality job creation and long-term employment opportunities.

With respect, we hope a positive decision will be made in the short term, as we are at a pivotal time in the equitable development of South East higher education.

Yours sincerely,



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County Carlow
Chamber



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